

The Arc Voice

Creating Opportunities within our Community for People with Cognitive Impairments and their Families to Experience more Meaningful and Satisfying Lives



Disability Policy Seminar 2008

From the Executive Director, Lauren Mullis

The first week of March I was able to attend the 2008 Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC. This is a conference that is hosted by The Arc of the United States, the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, United Cerebral Palsy and the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities.

I was challenged to absorb a significant amount of information regarding national public policy issues that are critical for people with developmental disabilities. Once I attended the sessions and reviewed the information I made my way to Capital Hill with other disability advocates from across North Carolina. We visited with Sue Myrick's legislative director, Sara Hale and discussed the importance and need for many things, but especially the need for Congress to support the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act (HR 1279).

Direct Support Professionals help millions of people with disabilities to live in their own home, at their family home or in their home communities. Many of you know these professionals well. Your child may even be currently out in the community working with a direct support professional. Or you yourself may be a direct support professional. Ask yourself this: how many support workers has your loved one had? Chances are, they've had a lot. You are not alone if this is the case.

We have a major problem! We have a nation wide shortage of individuals who are qualified to work in this field! Did you know that the direct support workforce ranks in the top 20 fastest growing occupations in the country?

The issue is that worker's don't get paid very much and can actually make more money in the fast food and retail areas. So needless to say we have actually lost some of this workforce to the fast food industry. That doesn't help fill the need. It broadens the gap. Obviously, when people can't find the help that they need, their safety, their health, their lives are at risk.

The direct support worker bill, if passed, would amend the Medicaid program to provide funds to States to enable them to increase the wages paid to targeted direct support professionals. It is designed to eliminate the gap between wages paid to private employees and wages paid to public employees of the state.

This bill was introduced in the House on March 1, 2007 and currently has 113 cosponsors. However, **NOT A SINGLE NORTH CAROLINA REPRESENTATIVE IS CURRENTLY CO SPONSORING THIS BILL!** We must work together to advance this policy not only for those who work in this field, but for those individuals with disabilities that rely on the support that these professionals provide to them. I urge you to contact your House Representative and ask them to co-sponsor the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act (HR 1279).

You can visit www.thearc.org (then click on Public Policy) to learn more about all of the issues that were discussed at this conference and find out who represents you so you can contact them!

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The Arc of Mecklenburg County Day

Our Proclamation Ceremony was a great success, as we gathered at Government Center to celebrate “The Arc of Mecklenburg County Day” with the Charlotte, Mecklenburg community. Grayce Crockett, the Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health Authority Director spoke, recognizing our hard work and service to the developmental disability community. Commissioner Dan Ramirez presented the proclamation and shared the Board of Commissioners sentiments about the importance of our agency to the community and the value of what we do. We also recognized our 55th Year Anniversary and shared how our agency has grown over the 55 years and what we have to look forward to as we continue to grow!



Pam Richards, Beverly Earle, Lauren Mullis, and Marilyn Ross



Presentation of the Proclamation



Lauren with self-advocates

The *New* Arc Website

We have recently updated our website and want you to visit! You can easily access our calendar, resource guide, programs, and services for more information and schedules. Now you can even renew your membership online or donate securely through PayPal! Check us out at www.arcmeck.org to see all of the great changes!

Arc Angels

The Arc Angels Awards Dinner will be the evening of Friday, June 20th. Keep an eye out for details to follow, you can always check our calendar at www.arcmeck.org for updated information. If you are interested in sponsoring a table this year please contact Meika at 704-332-4535 ext. 15 or meika@arcmeck.org for more information.

Community Education Update



Hello, My name is Sabrina McCracken and I am the new Community Education Coordinator for The Arc of Mecklenburg County. I have a history with the agency beginning as an intern

while in college and have now come full circle as the Community Education Coordinator. I am honored to be working for such a noble cause that is supported by such wonderful people. I have a wide range of experience working with people with developmental disabilities and am very excited to get started developing and enhancing the educational programming to reach more people in the Charlotte, Mecklenburg community. During my first couple of months here I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you and I look forward to meeting more of you soon. Thanks to all of you for your warm welcome here at the Arc.

As the Community Education Coordinator my primary focus is to coordinate and facilitate Education and Advocacy Workshops for individuals with disabilities and their families on important issues that affect their daily lives. I will also be working on the Resource Guide in an effort to compile current information on the agencies here in the Charlotte, Mecklenburg area for easier access to community programs and resources. I will also be working on increasing the awareness and understanding of developmental disabilities within our community by creating informational materials and holding events where the community can learn more about developmental disabilities. Through these efforts I will be able to help create greater recognition of The Arc of Mecklenburg County and the programs and services that we provide.

I am excited to be able to create opportunities within Mecklenburg County for people with disabilities and their families to experience meaningful and satisfying lives. Please give me a call at 704-332-4535 ext. 16 or via email at sabrina@arcmeck.org.

Successful Education Workshop!

Thank you to St. Matthews Catholic Church, Bree Jimenez, and the Education and Advocacy Committee for a successful education workshop! Everyone who attended the educational workshop on March 8th gained valuable information about how to access the general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Bree Jimenez provided both parents and educators with information and tools to prepare and educate them about what to expect during their child's academic career so they would be able to tackle important issues and face difficult challenges that may arise throughout the school aged years.

The Education and Advocacy Committee is planning more workshops at St. Matthew Catholic Church in the near future. Please stay tuned for more details on upcoming workshops.

Safe Fest: May 10th 10am—2pm



Independence Park

Join us and bring the whole family for a day of fun and safety. The Arc of Mecklenburg County is proud to sponsor Safe Fest, an event that will provide families of children with special needs with a chance to learn how to stay safe, whether they are at home, school, or in the community. This event is FREE and will teach parents and their children how to access community safety programs, and services, obtain information about various types of safety, and learn about the proper techniques and tools for everyday safety. We will have police and fire departments on hand, along with other community agencies and professionals who specialize in various fields of safety. Please contact Sabrina at 704-332-4535 ext. 16, Sabrina@arcmeck.org or visit our calendar at www.arcmeck.org and click on Safe Fest for more information.

The Arc of Mecklenburg is moving!



The Arc of Mecklenburg County will soon have a new address. After five years of being on N. Davidson Street it is time to move on to a bigger space in a better area of town. On April 22 we will officially be moved to 4108 Park Rd. Suite 409 Charlotte, NC 28209.

We are all very excited about this change and hope that it will be easier for our members and clients to visit with us and have better access to our services. Park Rd. is a bustling part of the city with easy access to Uptown, and the interstates. It has also become an area of town where many non-profits organizations are located.

Our telephone numbers will be staying the same however, our extensions may change. When you call us, just make sure to listen to the recording to hear our extension listing.

And as always, you can log on to our new and improved website for the latest news on the move and on our upcoming programs and workshops. We hope that you will find our new website easier to navigate. You can even pay your membership dues or donate funds online to us now using Pay Pal, which is a free, secure online payment method.

Thank you all for your continued support of The Arc of Mecklenburg County. We hope to see you when you come to visit us in our new office location!



[Personal Stories from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit \(NICU\)](#)

“Chance was born at 25 weeks weighing 1 lb. 10 oz and stayed in the hospital 195 days. He had a grad bleed on the right side of his head, and I was told he probably wouldn’t make it through the night. Chance stayed on a ventilator for five months because of underdeveloped lungs and now has BDP and chronic lung disease. He also had ROP and laser surgery on his eyes at four months old along with PDA surgery. He now has a titanium clip on his heart.

After coming home, Chance stayed on oxygen and a pulse-ox from July-April, 24 hours a day, making trips to the doctor every two weeks.

Chance is now 18 months old. He still gets breathing treatments twice a day and just recently came off the diuretic he was on. We still make more doctor visits than “normal” kids, but he is a regular little boy. He is truly a miracle and I have learned so much from him.”

*We are always looking for donations for our NICU project, which can include premie items, gift cards to dinner/movie for parents, and volunteers to assist with the dinner. NICU Dinners usually take place on the first Thursday evening of the month at Presbyterian Hospital. If interested contact Francine @704.332.4535 x10

2008 Annual Awards Dinner Nominations

The Arc of Mecklenburg County, Inc. is now accepting nominations for our Annual Awards Reception & Board Meeting. The categories for these awards are:

- Teacher of the Year
- Advocate of the Year
- Self-Advocate of the Year
- Parent of the Year
- Legislator of the Year
- Distinguished Services Award
- Direct Care Provider of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Business Partner of the Year
- Arc Angel of the Year

If you are interested in nominating someone that you feel has excelled in any of these areas please fill out this form and return it by **May 16, 2008** to:

The Arc of Mecklenburg County
4108 Park Rd. Suite 409
Charlotte, NC 28209

The Awards Dinner will take place on Friday, June 20th from 6:00—8:30, more info is to come...

Nomination Form

I, _____, have graciously nominated _____, for their service as _____ of the Year. This is because:

We Are...

- We are a well-established network that connects families and people with developmental disabilities to community resources.
 - We create awareness of developmental disabilities.
- We lobby legislators to ensure all the needs of people with developmental disabilities are met. (i.e. education, housing, services and funding)
 - We help people with developmental disabilities access services and the supports they need.
 - We encourage personal empowerment and self-advocacy.
- We educate the community about receiving, embracing, and engaging people with developmental disabilities in all facets of the community

Membership Application

Renew Your Membership Today!

<u>Sign up for:</u>	<u>Price</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Advocate	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Sponsor	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Arc Friend	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> President's Club	\$1000

Total: _____



Notification

Your Membership Goes a LONG way to help The Arc of Mecklenburg help those with disabilities and their families! Please become a member today!

It's TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!

- Method of Payment
- Check
 - Visa
 - MasterCard

Name

Address

Phone

The Arc of Mecklenburg County
2824 N. Davidson Street
Charlotte, NC 28205

Phone: 704-332-4535
Fax: 704-332-3148
generalinfo@arcmeck.org

Credit Card # Exp. date

Signature



Aktion Club's of Mecklenburg

We now have 3 official Aktion Clubs in Mecklenburg County sponsored by The Arc and 6 different Kiwanis Clubs in the area. We are excited that Aktion Club has been so successful, however, we know that some of you may want to know more about what these clubs really are and what happens in meetings. This information comes directly from The Aktion Club website, www.aktionclub.org :

An Aktion Club performs a variety of services for the community and cooperating agency. It conducts fund-raisers such as car washes, paper drives, and recycling projects to raise money for needs in the community.

Aktion Club members perform a variety of community services, such as environmental projects, park beautification, food drives, nursing home visitations, and assisting Kiwanis clubs with their projects.

Aktion Clubs also take time out for fun! Aktion members visit zoos, go to sporting events, and visit museums, among many other activities. They play as hard as they work. If there's an Aktion Club in your town, you can find its members anywhere there's service to be rendered or fun to be had.

Interested in joining a club? Contact Lauren at 704-332-4535 x 11 or Steve at 704-332-4535 x 17



- ***Friday, April 11th - Aktion Club South Mecklenburg Regular Meeting 7:00 pm at Central United Methodist Church***
- ***Friday, April 25th - Aktion Club Lake Norman Meeting, 7:00 pm at The Lake Norman Chamber***
- ***Wednesday, May 7th - Aktion Club Charlotte - Mecklenburg Charter Ceremony at Nevins Center, 9:00 am***
- ***Friday, May 9th - Aktion Club South Mecklenburg Regular Meeting, 7:00 pm Central United Methodist Church***
- ***Friday, May 23rd - Aktion Club Lake Norman Meeting, 7:00 pm at The Lake Norman Chamber***

Announcing the Carolina's Aktion Club Convention!

September 12—14, 2008

All Aktion Club members, sponsors, parents and chaperones from North and South Carolina are invited to attend the Third Annual Aktion Club Convention. This will be held at The Summit Center on Haw River State Park (just north of Greensboro, NC). The facility is wonderful, scenic (even on a wet, dreary day) and will be very conducive to all our activities

The tentative weekend schedule consists of arrival, dinner and a dance on Friday evening; a keynote speaker, two breakout sessions, breaks, dinner and a talent show on Saturday; and breakfast and a spiritual sendoff Sunday morning.

The cost per member, parent, advisor or chaperone has been set at \$75 per person. Accommodations include dormitory-style cabin rooms and motel-style rooms (limited availability and offered first-come, first served). The cost includes overnight accommodations for two nights, all meals and breaks.

If you are an Aktion Clubber you can apply for a scholarship to attend this convention by calling Lauren Mullis at 704-332-4535. The Arc of Mecklenburg and local Kiwanis Clubs are working together to provide a form of transportation to bring people to this event. Interested in going? Call Lauren!

THE Arc

OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, INC.

2824 N. Davidson Street

Charlotte, NC 28205

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The Arc of Mecklenburg County is dedicated to working with individuals with cognitive and intellectual impairments. We promote dignity, inclusion and choice for individuals and their families through advocacy, education, and support services.

We are on the Web! Check us out at
www.arcmeck.org



Help us save money!! Each returned newsletter costs us 60¢.
Please keep us updated with your address changes.

Announcements

- We are looking for Volunteers to help out with our SafeFest event. Looking for dedicated individuals to help with crowd direction, and at the volunteer table. If so go to www.volunteermatch.org where we post our volunteer needs for special events, or call Francine at 704.332.4535 x10. Get Involved!!
- Don't miss SAFEFEST on May 10th at Independence Park from 10:00am —2:00 pm!
- The Charlotte—Mecklenburg Schools transition fair will be held on Thursday, April 17th at East Mecklenburg High School from 5:00—7:30 pm
- The Aktion Club of Charlotte—Mecklenburg will have their official charter ceremony on Wednesday, May 7th at 9:00 am at the Nevins Center. Contact Lauren for more details at 704-332-4535 x 11

